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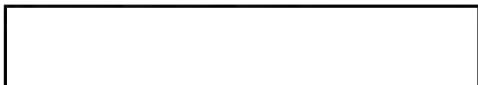
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Ecuador-Peru: Border quiet

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Political Developments in North Vietnam: Several recent North Vietnamese statements appear designed to pressure the US into a prolongation of any standdown in the bombing of the DRV during Tet.

These statements have implied, without a specific promise, that Hanoi might agree to talks with the US if the air strikes against North Vietnam are stopped "unconditionally." This message was stressed in a party daily commentary of 29 January on remarks made by Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh to pro-Communist journalist Wildred Burchett. Trinh asserted that if the US "really wants talks, it must first halt unconditionally the bombing raids and all other acts of war against the DRV."

Trinh went on to say that only after the US has complied with this demand "could there be talks between the DRV and the US."

Hanoi radio put extra stress on the latter sentence by stating that it should be "underlined." Hanoi's treatment of Trinh's interview implied that it was meant as an important official statement of North Vietnam's position.

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The Military Situation: No significant military actions have been reported in the past 24 hours.

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NOTE: The 722 personnel listed as "taken prisoner" in Operation CEDAR FALLS in the 28 January Central Intelligence Bulletin included 210 Viet Cong captured and 512 suspects detained.

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Japan: The comfortable, though reduced, majority which Prime Minister Sato's party gained in Sunday's lower house election assures continued conservative control of the government.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 277 seats as compared to the combined opposition's 200 seats in the 486-member house, according to the final but unofficial tally. Most of the nine independents elected, including three LDP members who ran without formal party blessing because of their involvement in scandals, are expected to affiliate with Sato's party. When postelection alignments are completed, Sato's margin will probably be about 25 seats smaller than before dissolution.

Although the LDP victory is not overwhelming, it is better than had been generally anticipated, and will help Sato's position in the party. Several party factions supporting Sato apparently fared well at the polls, which should dampen efforts to displace him.

The results are also a setback for the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), which won only 140 seats, four fewer than in the last election. The party's losses reflect on its new radical leadership. Moderates in the JSP will try to regain control in order to temper the party's radical pro-Peking posture. If they fail, they might eventually join the Democratic Socialist Party, which raised its holdings from 23 to 30 seats.

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Ecuador-Peru: The 25th anniversary of the Rio Protocol passed without a major incident in either country. Scattered demonstrations by leftists and extremists on 27 and 28 January in Quito and Guayaquil were easily controlled by the police. Ecuadorean fears of Peruvian military incursions on the 29th proved groundless. The absence of a major incident should ease tensions, but Ecuador's boundary claim will continue to be an abrasive issue between the two countries.

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